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ABSTRACT

This collection of stories is the result of a publishing project conducted with adult learners in the Reach One Program. The first page describes the steps that led to the finished product: providing a catalyst to stress the value of maintaining a family history; providing activities to stimulate memories of family stories; encouraging prewriting activities; writing the first draft; editing; revising and editing; arranging the stories into an ordered collection; choosing a title; and publishing and distributing. Titles in the section on "Family" include the following: "A Story about When I Was a Little Girl"; "To My Grandmother with Love"; "Our Visits to the Country"; "My Grandmother"; "Visits with Grandparents"; "My Family"; "My Sister"; "A Picture of Family"; "My Pet Roxie"; and "Spoiled Pet." Titles in the "Decisions" section are as follows: "Don't Smoke"; "On Not Making One of the Biggest Mistakes of Your Life"; "A Decision"; "A Story"; "I Learned the Hard Way"; "Drop Out"; "Education"; and "Special Fellow." (YLB)

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

FAMILY STORIES

by

The Members of The Reach One Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Peg Levine, Ph.D., Instructor

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Columbus, Ohio
1991

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The Ohio State University/Columbus Public Schools
Reach One Program
Peg Levine, Ph.D., Instructor

OAACE Carousel Presentation
Family Stories: A Publishing Project
April 4, 1992

1. Provide a catalyst--a guest speaker, video, and/or readings which stress the value of maintaining a family history.

2. Provide activities to stimulate memories of family stories:

   A. Ask learners to imagine a family photograph and write its description and/or its story.
   B. Encourage learners to examine family photographs and bring in prictures to write about.
   C. Have learners draw a family tree and make notes on stories associated with each relative.
   D. Have learners list possessions important to their families; pick one object from the list and tell its story.
   E. Learners in pairs should share stories aloud to assure them of the interest value of their stories. Listeners should ask questions to bring out details.

3. Once learners have chosen the stories they plan to tell, encourage additional pre-writing activities on those specific stories.

4. Have learners write the first draft of the family story every other line. Remind them that a draft is just a draft and they can add or make changes on the blank lines.

5. Editing stage should involve feedback from sharing stories with other writers and minimal marking from the instructor.

6. Revising and editing should continue as needed. Appropriate grammar exercises can be assigned to individuals throughout the process.

7. If a word processing lab is available, schedule time for learners to type up their stories.

8. Provide each individual with a set of photocopied family stories. Ask them to look for common themes to use in arranging essays into an ordered collection and then have the group as a whole decide on an order.

9. Share ideas from individual brainstorming on possible titles; choose a title by vote.

10. Publish and distribute.

FAMILY

A STORY ABOUT WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

I am writing a story about when I was a little girl. I came up with no mother and father. It was hard coming up. I had to go to work and I had to take care of my brothers and sisters. I was just ten years old. I had to drop out of school. I always wanted to go to school but I did not have the opportunity. I had to go and get a dishwasher job. Then I got a job at a restaurant as a cook when I was 16 years old. That is the way I had to pay the bills.

Pearl Jones

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TO MY GRANDMOTHER WITH LOVE

I was in class when the teacher told us to close our eyes and think of a photograph or something that we thought would make a good story to write about.

Right away this came to my mind, so I would like to tell you a story about a photograph of my grandmother Eubanks. She is my dad's mom. She would always tell my sister and me that girls are supposed to act like little ladies. But when I was a little girl, I saw a picture of her standing on a milk case with a basket on her head. She was getting ready to feed the chickens on the other side of the fence. My grandmother is only 4 feet 10 inches tall and she had red hair then that went all the way down her back. She would have to take her hair and let it hang on the back of the couch at night. In the daytime she would wear it up in a bun. The last time I saw my grandmother I was fourteen years old and she was still trying to make a lady out of me.

Donna Jean Eubanks Barger

OUR VISITS TO THE COUNTRY

This is my story about my grandparents. When I was about eight years old, my aunt would take me and my two cousins to visit our grandparents every weekend; we knew where we were going for it was our weekly social. She would pack our clothes and off we went to the country to visit our grandparents, which was about a forty five minute drive from where we lived. When we would arrive there both grandparents would be sitting on the front porch waiting for us. My aunt would sit and chit chat with her parents for a moment then she was off, back on the road home until Sunday, our pick-up day.

Then once my aunt left, Grandmother always asked us kids if we wanted some milk and cookies, then she proceeded into the kitchen to fix us some goodies.

On the other hand my grandfather would go hitch up the mule team, while grandma prepared a picnic basket for us to take down by the creek bank, where we would fish. We would be fishing for hours, just about until it became almost dark. We caught plenty of fish, but grandpa always caught the most. He would say it's getting late now we must go home, so we loaded up everything and home we went. Along the old wagon trail my grandpa had a watermelon patch, he would stop

the wagon team and we would go pull watermelon from the vine along with cantaloupe.

Once we arrived back to our grandparents' house we would help them with their stock; we had to feed the two mules, cows and the hogs. We also drew water from the well for our house use and to take baths. And after dinner we would make home made ice cream for ourselves. Our grandparents would tell us stories about themselves when they were growing up.

The End.

Jay Hollis

MY GRANDMOTHER

My family story is about my grandmother. When I was little, my grandmother liked to go fishing with me. We would go in the morning before it was too hot, and sometimes my father and brother would go too. My mother and sister did not like fishing too much.

She was about 69 when I stated driving. My grandmother and I went all over the city and downtown. She liked to eat out. Sometimes she called me to see if I could come over and pick up some pop and pizza for her. She also called me over to take her places if my sister would not. Or she would take the bus downtown and walk around the stores to look at things.

I liked helping my grandmother out because of the things she did for me in my life. I will not forget all the things we did together.

Chris Bowman

VISIT WITH GRANDPARENTS

Grandma's name was Mary. She was short, chubby and had long black hair and wore braids. She was mixed with American Indian blood. Her mother was an Apache. My grandfather's name was Wash Martain. He was a short thin man. His hair was curly but he was bald on top of his head. They lived in a small country town, Troy, Alabama, on a farm. We lived in a city called Montgomery, Alabama. When school was out, there in Montgomery, Alabama, my 3 brothers Bob, Tommy, Ezell, and I would go to visit my grandparents in this small country town.

On their farm she had cows and hogs and mules. Early in the morning my grandma would wake us up to go to the cotton fields with Grandfather. We would have fun picking cotton. I only picked 50 pounds a day when the others would pick 100 pounds or more a day. On Saturday we would go to town in the cotton wagon and ride on the cotton. It was fun for my brother and me to ride on top of the cotton Grandpa took to the gin. Grandma taught us how to milk the cow and churn milk for butter. It was fun to us to see the butter on top of the milk. She would take the dasher and pull the butter to the side and take it out of the churn and put it in the mold. It would come out in a round cake. My grandma would take us to pick black berries along the fence and in the woods. She would make pies on Saturday and on Sunday she

would take us to the church. We also would have dinner. She would pack big boxes of food, place it all in a trunk and take it to church and spread it out on the table. The people would eat and eat and really enjoy themselves. It was called a church dinner. Late that evening we went back to our grandparents' home. We enjoyed the summer with our grandparents picking cotton, picking black berries, and milking the cow and going to church and riding on top of the cotton in the wagon. When summer was over we began to pack up and return to our home in Montgomery, Alabama.

Creasie Holton

MY FAMILY

My name is Tommy. I was born in Lafollette, Tennessee. My father's name is Andrew and he worked in the coal mine for about 25 years. My mother's name was Grace and she was a housewife. I have three sisters and one brother.

Our house was heated by a potbelly stove and a fireplace. We would get wood to start the fire and then put on coal. One of our jobs was to see that the wood and coal was brought in every day. My brother is one year older. When my brother and I were not working in the garden we played in the woods.

On Saturday we all went to town. That was the thing to do. My father would talk to everyone he would see. My brother and I would take in an all day movie.

Tommy Cooper

MY SISTER

This is about my sister Joyce. When I was little she took me to the store to buy a popsicle and when I got the popsicle she would tell me I don't have any money to pay for it. She would tease me and then she would pay for it.

When I was litte I went to the store to get some cookies but I did not have money to pay for the cookies. So Joyce made me take the cookies back and I would cry and say I am going to tell my mom.

Charles Angus

A PICTURE OF FAMILY

I was born in St. Louis, Missouri and I have one sister and four brothers. Their names are Gloria, Dale, Jeffery, Steven, and Emmett. We've been living in Columbus about 19 years.

When I was little I liked to play with the boys and my brother Dale did not want me to be around him and his friends. But I did not care. I went anyway. Another time, my brother Steven used to chase little girls, hit them, and take their candy and potato chips and my mother did not know until she got home from work. She would work at nights.

My sister Gloria and I went over to our grandmother's house. She used to give us money and we went to the store. But my sister used to get mad at me because Grandmother used to give me anything I wanted so she would tell on me to get me in trouble. Another time my cousin and I would walk over to our friend's house and we all tried to get enough money so we all could go and buy some fried rice.

On Sundays we had to go to church and after church we all went to the movies and we met some boys. My cousin and I would talk about the boys, which one she liked and which one I liked. The boy I liked came over and asked me for my phone number. I wanted to give it to him but I was scared. But we did meet and he gave me his number. We talked, went to the movies, and had a nice time.

Eunice Crawley

MY PET ROXIE

One day in April 1979, my husband and I and my two sons went out to look for a pet dog.

We went to a couple of pet stores but could not find anything. So we decided to go to the pound. When we got there we saw lots of dogs but there was one that we kept going back to. Every time we would walk away she would put her paws through the bars or she would scratch at the cage floor in a digging motion as if she was trying to dig her way out. My family and I continued walking and looking for a dog. Both of my boys wanted to go back and look at this black and grey cockapoo one more time.

After about an hour, we decided to take her home.

When the poundkeeper let her out of the cage all of the other dogs started to bark and howl as if they were saying goodby. She walked out of there just like a lady, head up in the air and a bounce in every step. Until the day she died, which was June 16, 1990, she was a sweet, caring and loving family friend.

Barbara Henderson

SPOILED PET

I remember my dog Bumper. He was a poodle. We used to go camping and I'd ride him around the park in a basket on my bicycle. He was a very spoiled little dog.

When we mowed the grass he'd run after the tractor and we'd have to stop and put him on it. If he didn't get to ride with us he'd go inside and get behind the freezer and pout. When he'd pout he would sit behind the freezer and look out at you with his head hung down. If you ignored him he'd sneeze and paw on the floor so we would have to take him for a ride.

Bumper passed away last summer and we buried him under a tree in our back yard. We planted flowers on his grave. If you saw it you would think it was a human's grave. We miss him a lot. I don't know if we will ever own another dog.

Phyllis Charles

DECISIONS

DON'T SMOKE

When I was in school, I wanted to be among the hip people. But in order to do that you had to have smoked cigarettes. So one day while walking home from school Glenn and I stopped at the corner store. We went inside and asked the clerk for a pack of Kools. The clerk asked us who were the cigarettes for. Glenn said they were for his father, so the clerk handed us the cigarettes, and we gave him the money. As we were walking home we fired up one of those cigarettes. I thought everything was going to be great until I got sick. My head started hurting then I felt dazed. All of a sudden I vomited. I had to sit on the sidewalk. Then it dawned on me that sometimes it's better to be different. So I always tell my kids to make their own decisions. Don't let other people make decisions for you because the decision you make is the one you have to live with.

Eugene Lewis

ON NOT MAKING ONE OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES OF YOUR LIFE

Looking back over the past, the biggest mistake I made was quitting high school. The importance of a high school diploma is something that I didn't think much about before I quit school. I didn't really think much about anything in those days. But the importance dawned on me when I started to look for work. When I was in school I took education for granted, I thought a person could find a job even without a diploma. They can, but it will never be the kind of job they can get with one.

People with a diploma can do so many things. They can continue their education, which is very advisable in this high tech society we live in. Or go into the trade schools to learn things like plumbing, heating and cooling and data processing. Or they can get in to civil service and get a good job with a government agency. The point is they have a good start with a diploma. The person who doesn't have one will always be at a disadvantage when it comes to the job market. The fact is persons with high school diplomas will make more money during their lives than persons without diplomas.

I don't have a family or children yet, but if I ever do, I will stress the importance of education and how it will effect their lives and standard of living. But not only

that, the problem of self-esteem can be addressed too. You feel better about yourself when you have completed something, especially when you realize the results will be with you for the rest of your life.

Gary Days

A DECISION

Now that I'm older, I look back when I was 18 years old and the decision I made to quit school and join the Marines.

At that time in my life I was not going anywhere. I was cutting school and was bored with everything and was starting to get into a lot of trouble so going into the Marines was a good idea for me.

I did not know if the timing was right. The Vietnam War was going on and I thought about it a lot before I did it. My life was a big game at 18 and I had to get serious about it. At the time school was not all that important to me. I made the decison about two months before I was to go and start my service time. I did not tell anyone in my family. It was my secret that I kept until a week before I was to go. I was going to leave on Dececember 26, 1970. It was something new and exciting and I was ready for it. I'm glad that I did it. I learned a lot and came of age and got a sense of what's right and wrong. It's given me a lot of things to look back on, the good and bad.

I learned how to work with people and made good friends. But best of all I learned how to make it on my own and not lean on others so much.

Danny Radcliffe

A STORY

My mother tried very hard to make sure that I would grow up and do something with myself. And I feel like I may have let her down when I did not complete high school like I should have. She had even promised to buy me a car if I would have graduated.

It was summer break in 1976. I went out of town to visit with my dad in Toledo, Ohio. It was around about July. My dad had come home from work one day and wanted to know if anyone wanted a job. I said "Yes. I want a job." And it turned out to be enlisting in the Army, which really didn't seem to be a bad idea. So 2 of my brothers and myself went ahead and took the tests and passed. Then I came back to Columbus. I had to wait until October 1976, that's when I received my orders.

My mom had to go to the school and sign me out. She really didn't want to but she did. I went back to Toledo so that I could be able to catch a plane to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and that's when my military life started. I was gone for about six months going through basic training and Advanced Individual Training. I came back home in February 1977 as a National Guardsman. My only regret is that I never went back to school. If I had to do it all over again I would have completed high school.

Wayne Tyler

I LEARNED THE HARD WAY

Now that I'm older, I regret that I started having children when I was fifteen years old. I had to drop out of school after the eighth grade. I wish my mother would have told me more about sex then. All she would tell me is one thing leads to another, instead of her sitting down and telling me what life was really about. I wish she had known about birth control then.

I tried going to night school but it didn't work out either. I wish I had stayed in school because I missed going to the school dances and the prom, and going to college. I had to get out and get a job when I was eighteen. My first job was at BBF, then at White Castle. I wanted to be a dancer, travel and have nice things. I tell my children to go to school and get a good education. I tell my children to get a good job, have a nice home, travel, do the things that you want to do out of life, then you can have children and be able to take care of them. If I had to do it over again, I think I would be a little smarter and wiser.

Virginia Skiver

DROP OUT

When I was seventeen years old, I had a chance to finish high school. I stopped in the twelfth grade. I had six months to go. I quit and got a job making one dollar per hour. I never thought things would change when I was young. Now I realize that I made a mistake in not finishing high school. But I encouraged my kids to finish high school. Now they have finished high school. I have two with two years of college and one with one year of college. My son joined the Navy after one year of college. But he is going back to school when he gets out.

I am planning on taking a course when I get my G.E.D. My mom and dad told me if I had finished high school they would have sent me to college. But I was hardheaded, I wanted to experience life. Now that I am older and wiser I want to compete with my kids. I want to prove to them that I can do it. I am proud of them and I want them to be proud of me.

But it's too late to look back. It is time to move on so my goal is to go farther and not dally on the past. We all make mistakes when growing up but you don't realize it until it's too late. But now I can correct the mistake that I made. Thanks to Reach 1 I can get my G.E.D.

J. R. Whaley

EDUCATION

My name is Helen. I am married and have a family of four children. I have two older girls. One is named Dianna and the other is named Denise. I married at a very young age, seventeen years old. We had our first child at nineteen years old. Our first set of children grew up with us. We were very close friends. I taught my children they could always confide in me.

I learned a lot by my mistakes. I let both of my older girls quit school, one at the age of sixteen and the other at the age of seventeen. The oldest girl had a baby at seventeen years old. The next to the oldest just worked all the time. I learned from my own experience that you cannot reach your desired goals in life if you don't have an education. We all are blessed to have many talents but without an education you just cannot apply yourself. You are limited in so many ways. I watched my older children get into a stupor. But I thank God one finally realized she can still educate herself. It's not too late. I also learned now that I have two more children that no matter how hard it may seem there's no more quitting school because you need all the education you can get if you're to be successful in life. Also it makes you feel more secure. What can you do without having a degree of some kind?

Some people may not be very smart academically, but there's also other skills and trades they can learn. I told my last children you are gifted with some type of talent. You have to work with your teacher until your best comes on the surface and manifests itself. Then and only then will you be satisfied with yourself. We all have something to offer to society.

Helen Harris

SPECIAL FELLOW

Ever since I was a young fellow, I always believed that I was something special because God gave me a gift of learning mechanical things real early. At the age of 7 I built my first radio from a razor blade, nails and electrical wire; it worked real well. Then at the age of fifteen my father's car engine had busted a head gasket. I went to the library and signed out an auto manual and read it for a couple of days. Then I begin to tear down the engine part by part and labeled each part by name and number. As I got to the part that was broken, I went to the parts store and purchased the head gaskets I needed, then I proceeded to put the engine back together. When I finished, the car ran fine. From that day forth, I could do just about anything that anyone else could do. My saying is that the first person didn't have anyone to teach him, he learned by trial and error, so I can do the same.

Jim Sims